

# VOICES



**A NEWSLETTER BY OFFICE FOR WOMEN AND COMMISSION FOR WOMEN**  
**INFORMING AND CELEBRATING WOMEN AND GIRLS IN FAIRFAX COUNTY**

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 1

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## First "Mentoring" Roundtable Deemed a Success

On March 18 over 30 high school girls joined professional women from information technology, engineering, and graphic design fields for "Shop Talk", an innovative program offered by the Office For Women. At a time when women represent 46 percent of working Americans, but just 19 percent of the science, engineering, and technology workforce, "Shop Talk" offered students a much-needed opportunity to interact with women in a variety of fields. The luncheon program was made possible through the generous support of Freddie Mac.



The girls were 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders from around the county enrolled in advanced technology or graphic design courses at Chantilly or Fairfax High School Academies. They were able to engage in small group discussions with 12 professional network and software engineers, graphic designers and entrepreneurs. The diverse group ranged from an environmental engineer who used computer modeling to analyze dispersal of anthrax in the Hart Senate Office Building last fall to the coordinator of Internet services for Fairfax County Public Library's award-winning web site.

MENTORING CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

SEE MORE ON GIRLS & TECHNOLOGY ON PAGE 3

## Summer Tech Resource Guide for Girls Now Available

The 2002 edition of the "Summer Tech Resource Guide for Girls" is available free of charge from



the Office For Women (OFW). The resource guide provides information on dozens of summer enrichment programs designed to increase girls' interest in technology

and computer activities.

OFW first published the Summer Tech Resource Guide for Girls in 2000 in response to data showing that girls are underrepresented in high school computer science and technology courses. The Northern Virginia Regional Partnership, which funds summer technology programs for middle-school students across the region, has helped underwrite distribution of the resource guide.

The guide is available online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofw](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofw). Copies are also available at Fairfax County Public Libraries and community and recreation centers. You may also call the Office For Women at 703-324-5730 or e-mail [maria.foltz@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:maria.foltz@fairfaxcounty.gov) to request a copy.

## WE HAVE A NEW LOOK!

The Commission For Women and Office For Women have combined resources to bring you a new and improved newsletter that offers more resources and information than before. To honor our newest collaboration, we have also changed our name. We chose VOICES because it reflects the nature of a newsletter, which is to inform and the many languages we speak in our diverse community of women. Speaking together, we can make our **VOICES** heard.

# Attorney General Jerry Kilgore Delivers on Promise to Wage a War Against Domestic Violence and Family Abuse

The Network Against Family Abuse recently hosted Virginia's newly elected Attorney General Jerry Kilgore. During his campaign, Kilgore promised to fight domestic violence, saying that "it is time for an all-out war against domestic violence," and calling it "one of the last unchecked strongholds of criminal activity." As part of his commitment, he will launch a public awareness campaign to "pull it out of the shadows and put it at the forefront of Virginia's public policy."

His first action in office was to propose legislation that addressed some of the issues. The General Assembly approved his amendment to the "spousal rape" statute that had previously required that a couple must be living apart before spousal rape could be charged. Under the new provision, spousal rape can occur between a husband and wife who live in the same home. In addition, it removes the condition that a spouse must have inflicted a "forceful injury" in order to be convicted of rape.

The legislature approved more training for police officers responding to domestic violence calls, increased the punishments for stalking, and established a new statewide domestic violence coordinator housed in the Attorney General's Office who will oversee these issues at the state level. Kilgore tried to get money to build more shelters for women and children who are victims of abuse but wasn't successful due to financial constraints. He also wasn't able to win approval for mandatory jail time for spouses who are repeat offenders or those who violate protective orders, citing again a lack of funds for the new initiatives.

Kilgore admits that Virginia is not providing adequate services to battered women and children but also acknowledges that the state's financial problems will keep it from doing so in the near future.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

## HELP NEEDED FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

Volunteer Court Companions are needed in the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court to help victims of domestic violence. Volunteer hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Court companions provide clients with information on the court process, help clients review options, accompany victims during the hearing and assist court staff in processing domestic violence cases. Spanish language volunteers are encouraged to apply. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age. For more information and an application, call 703-246-2607.

## Someplace Safe

This is a special resource for police officers in the field for response to domestic violence situations. Victims will be afforded immediate protection, support, shelter, and counseling during a difficult time. This will help them to become more willing to participate in the criminal justice process. Trained bilingual counselors will be on hand to link victims directly to community resources. Someplace Safe is available 24-hours a day. Victims who need overnight accommodations will be housed at a safe location. For more information, call the Victim Witness Unit at 703-246-2141 or the Fairfax County Public Safety Communications Center at 703-691-2131.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE RESOURCES

### POLICE

Emergency	911
Non-Emergency	703-691-2131

### HOTLINES

Child Protective Services	703-324-7400
Adult Protective Services	703-324-7450
Va. Child Abuse Hotline	800-552-7096
National Domestic Violence Hotline	
(Eng. & Spanish)	800-799-7233
TTY	800-787-3224
Family Violence and Sexual	
Assault (Virginia)	800-838-8238
Victim Assistance Network	703-360-7273

## Women's Health Roundtable: Partnering in Health

At the first meeting of the Women's Health Roundtable in November, Dr. Carol Sharrett, Director of the Public Health Department commented on the many health issues facing women today. Particular among them is the importance and availability of mammograms for low-income women, providing health services for low-income, older women and the increasingly overweight population in our country. The Women's Health Roundtable is a new partnership created by the Fairfax County Office For Women and the Commission For Women. According to Alta Newman, Chair of the Fairfax County Commission For Women "We have seen a great deal of interest and energy around health issues for our county's women and girls, whose health needs have often been invisible or unfamiliar to the public. As their first priority, the women's health roundtable members will select specific areas where we can do the most good in our community."



Some health issues are affected by cultural factors that impact access to information or to health care itself. Self esteem, parental consent and peer pressure all affect a girl's ability to get accurate health care information that allows them to make wise decisions. The list of topics pertinent to adolescent health discussed included mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, sexually transmitted diseases, date rape/violence, domestic abuse, pregnancy, eating disorders, and a host of problems related to gang involvement including most of those already mentioned

Members of the Women's Health Roundtable joined the Board of Supervisors in proclaiming April as Women and Girls' Wellness Month in Virginia. If you would like more information or wish to join the roundtable, contact the Office For Women. For more information on Women and Girls' Wellness Month, go to [www.womenshealthvirginia.org](http://www.womenshealthvirginia.org). Additional resources for women's and girls' health can be found on the insert to this newsletter.

## Mentoring CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Earlier in the day, the Chantilly Academy students visited Fairfax County's Group Decision Support Center to learn about its innovative use of technology to solve complex policy problems. The girls experienced the power of the computer-supported conference facility first-hand, engaging in a high-tech focus group aimed at developing a list of recommendations for increasing the number of girls in technology classes in Fairfax County. The Office for Women plans to include these recommendations in a report it is preparing on its girls and technology initiative over the past five years.

Both student and adult participants labeled the day a success. Girls reported that the roundtable discussions had helped them refine their focus, think more about other careers, and given them new inspiration for college and the workforce. The speakers said the interaction helped them understand the interests of young women and even understand some of their own choices better.

### Sleeping Beauty Redefined: African American Girls in Transition

Middle or junior high school is a time of transition for all students. A growing body of literature focuses on the special challenges or problems adolescent girls face in school and in developing and maintaining their sense of self-esteem. Attention is starting to focus on the extra problems faced by minority girls. African American girls are at the intersection of both bodies of research, yet as a sub-population we know little about the factors that contribute to their academic success or failure. African American adolescent girls are more likely than boys to be rebuffed by teachers and more likely to be ignored or disrespected by teachers and counselors. Given that, it isn't any surprise that African American women and women of color are also extremely under-represented in science, mathematics, and technology careers. ([www.ael.org/nsf/voices/rpsleep.htm](http://www.ael.org/nsf/voices/rpsleep.htm))

### Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC)

ENC's mission is to identify effective curriculum resources, create high-quality professional development materials, and disseminate useful information and products to improve K-12 mathematics and science and learning. [www.enc.org](http://www.enc.org)

## Domestic Violence CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

In Virginia, 4,000 families are provided shelter annually but that number represents only 50% of the number who actually seek shelter as a result of family violence. Mim Keo, coordinator of Fairfax County's Women's Shelter, said families often ask for assistance and then wait weeks to get in. Fairfax County's only women's shelter recently signed a contract to expand from 17 beds to 29, but that is still "much too small for a county of nearly 1 million people," said Keo, who's been with the shelter since it opened in 1977 with 12 beds.

In his comments, Kilgore stated that working with victims and families of abuse is often frustrating and thankless. "The answers are never easy, and the solutions are rarely there," he said. "Victims often return to an abusive situation...you watch charges being dropped again and again, or you have to inform a victim the nearest shelter is an hour away and they're going to have to take their kids out of school." In the absence of more funding, Kilgore said state and local governments need to better coordinate their victim service programs.

In addition to capacity problems, communities as diverse as Fairfax County face several linguistic and cultural challenges. According to Ms. Keo, last year alone, 34 percent of the families housed in the county's

shelter were either Hispanic or Latino. She said the shelter keeps interpreters on call, but overcoming cultural views of domestic violence is difficult. "We need for these victims to be aware that they don't deserve to be beaten," she said. "So many think they do."

Fairfax County's Network Against Family Abuse consists of more than 40 county and public safety agencies, faith groups and charities. In existence since 1982, NAFA (formerly the Domestic Violence Coalition) continues to support the original purpose of the coalition by increasing public awareness of support services and legal remedies available to families and individuals experiencing violence or abuse. Despite the network's accomplishments, Keo said its efforts could be improved. "Some agencies need to take this more seriously," she said. "There's a need for cooperation and a coordinated response and to do something, to make changes in the status quo." NAFA's new name carries with it a new energy and a new focus on the need for a coordinated community response to domestic violence in Fairfax County. The goal of NAFA is to partner with individuals, non-profit organizations, county agencies, the police, and the courts to develop a plan for community action to reduce and eliminate domestic violence in the county. For more information on NAFA, contact the chair Jewell Mikula at 703-538-7072.

## Health Facts for Women

Domestic Violence affects women in ways that are not always easy to measure. Many abused women feel they don't deserve to have good health care, or have been told they can't take their children to the doctor.

In Virginia HIV/AIDS is the 3rd leading cause of death among African American females aged 15-24 years. HIV/AIDS among many cultural groups is on the increase and among females of all cultures it is increasing at alarming rates.

Forty-two percent of women who have heart attacks die within one year of the attack. This compares with twenty-four percent of men. Many of the risk factors for heart disease are similar for women and men. They are smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, extra weight, and a sedentary lifestyle.

Some risk factors such as diabetes, high levels of triglycerides, and low levels of HDL cholesterol appear

to increase the risk more for women than for men. (Women's Policy Inc.)

In 1998, diabetes was ranked the sixth leading cause of death among women overall and the fourth leading cause of death among Black and Hispanic women. Risk factors for Type II Diabetes are: being more than 30% overweight, having a family history of diabetes, cultural heritage (Black, Hispanic or American Indian), and/or having complications known to be related to diabetes (Women's Health Data Book).

Cultural heritage affects women's health:

- ◆ Hispanic women have lower incidences of breast cancer but higher death rates.
- ◆ Most Islamic women prefer to see female physicians. If a male physician is the only person available, they may do without health care.
- ◆ Cervical Cancer among Vietnamese women is seven times higher than the average for other races.

## SELECTED WOMEN'S HEALTH RESOURCES

*These links are sources of information on topics relating to women's health and wellness and are not a substitute for medical care by a trained professional.*

**Agency for Health Research and Quality (301-594-1364) [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov) Informacion en Espanol**

Information and research on children's, women's and minority health. Looks at topic currently affecting women, such as breast and cervical cancer and heart disease.

**American Cancer Society (1-800-227-2345) [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) Informacion en Espanol**

This site provides information about the different types of cancer and who is at risk. Techniques for early detection and prevention techniques are offered. Statistical information is also provided on the most current cancer findings.

**American Diabetes Association (1-800-342-2383) [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) Informacion en Espanol**

Provides basic information about the different types of diabetes and the risk factors for the disease.

**American Heart Association (212-242-8721) <http://women.americanheart.org/action.html> Informacion en Espanol**

Information on heart disease, stroke and the effect on women. Has a risk assessment guide and links to publications.

**National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations (212-889-0606) [www.nabco.org](http://www.nabco.org)**

Information on the latest breast cancer information and research. Has a resource list, links to NABCO publications, and information on how to find support groups. Does e-mail reminders for breast exams.

**National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (301-496-5133) [www.nichd.nih.gov](http://www.nichd.nih.gov)**

National Institutes of Health, 9000 Rockville Pike, Building 31, Room 2A32, Bethesda, MD 20892

**National Women's Health Information Center (1-800-994-9662) [www.4woman.gov](http://www.4woman.gov) Informacion en Espanol.**

By the Office of Women's Health in the Department of Health and Human Services. Health information and referral center for women. Offers many resources on topics affecting women of all age.

**OB-GYN Net website [www.obgyn.net/women/women.aap](http://www.obgyn.net/women/women.aap)**

Global, physician reviewed network for doctors, women and the medical industry. Special section on women's health.

**Office of HIV/AIDS Policy (202-690-5560) [www.surgeongeneral.gov/ophs/hiv/aids/htm](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/ophs/hiv/aids/htm)**

DGGS, Office of the Secretary, Hubert H. Humphrey Building, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 730E, Washington, DC 20201

**Office of Minority Health Resource Center (1-800-444-6472) [www.omhrc.gov](http://www.omhrc.gov)**

Government-sponsored resource that provides up to date information on issues relating to minority health.

**Office of Minority Health (301-443-5224) [www.hrsa.gov/OMH/OMH/OMH.HTM](http://www.hrsa.gov/OMH/OMH/OMH.HTM)**

Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resource and Service Administration, Rockwall II Building, Suite 1000, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857

**Office of Research on Minority Health (301-402-1770) [www1.od.nih.gov/ormh/main.html](http://www1.od.nih.gov/ormh/main.html)**

National Institutes of Health, 9000 Rockville Pike, Building 1, Room 201, Bethesda, MD 20892

**Office on Women's Health (202-690-7650) [www.4woman.gov/owh](http://www.4woman.gov/owh)**

Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 730B, Washington DC 20201

**Office of Women's Health (404-639-7230) [www.fda.gov/womens](http://www.fda.gov/womens)**

Food and Drug Administration, Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, HFE-88, Rockville, MD 20857

**Office of Women's Health (301-443-8695) [www.hrsa.gov/WomensHealth](http://www.hrsa.gov/WomensHealth)**

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Parklawn Building, Room 14-25, 5600 Fisher Lane, Rockville, MD 20857

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (301-443-8956) [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)**

DHHS Parklawn Building, Room 12-105, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857

**SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (1-800-729-6686) [www.health.org](http://www.health.org)**

Urban Latina, Latina Health Matters [www.urbanlatina.com/latina\\_health.htm](http://www.urbanlatina.com/latina_health.htm)



# Women in Public Safety Update

In the last issue of our newsletter, we reported on Fairfax County's first public safety job fair for women and on some of the issues facing women in public safety careers. As you may recall, one of the issues was the improper fit of women's protective equipment. Since the tragedy of 9/11, public safety officers in New York City have been working 12 hour shifts on a regular basis. The longer hours have magnified problems with equipment and uniform fit for women officers.



The Institute for Women in Trades, Technology and Science (IWITTS) ([www.iwitts.org](http://www.iwitts.org)) has been involved in this issue for years and recently formed the Women in Policing Institute (WIPI). IWITTS has found that:

- Generally, a third of female officers report problems with uniform and equipment fit.
- An ergonomics study conducted by the California Highway Patrol in 1997 on duty belt and holster design found that when new, standard leather belts conform poorly to the shape of female and slender male personnel.
- Nationwide, officers and cadets experience hip and back pain related to improper fit.

The good news is that the use of contour belts, dropped shanks, and in many cases, synthetic materials, goes a long way towards resolving this problem.

In order to obtain more data on this problem, IWITTS is conducting an on-line survey using its "Law Enforcement Environmental Assessment Tools Anonymous Survey." The survey is for both male and female officers and is related to uniform and equipment fit. According to Chief Edward Flynn of the Arlington County Police Department, "It's the best tool kit I've ever seen for the recruitment and retention of women police officers. If you need to take the temperature of your police department's internal culture, this is a great thermometer." To complete the survey go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=4238797172](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=4238797172). They will report the results in a future newsletter.

For information on the survey itself, go to [www.iwitts.com/html/asurv.html](http://www.iwitts.com/html/asurv.html)

The Institute for Women in Trades, Technology and Science (IWITTS) recently launched WomenTechWorld's E-Jobs which brings together employers that want more female applicants with women seeking traditionally male jobs. They have a special law enforcement section. Get in on the ground level and post your jobs on E-Jobs today ([www.womentechworld.org/jobs.htm](http://www.womentechworld.org/jobs.htm)).

## First Woman Appointed U.S. Park Police

Chief Teresa Chambers is the first woman to be appointed to the position of Chief of the U.S. Park Police for the National Park Service. In doing so, she is the first female to head the park police in its 210-year history. The National Park Service's responsibility extends from parklands and monuments in Washington, DC to federal parklands such as the Statue of Liberty and San Francisco's Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The agency also works closely with the Secret Service in helping to provide protection for visiting dignitaries and the president.

In her new job, Chief Chambers reports to a woman, Fran Mainella, Director of the National Park Service, who in turn reports to a woman, Gale North, the Secretary of the Interior, who answers to the President ...someday a woman.

If you have been having a tough time finding body armor that comes in cup sizes or a "Sally Browne" duty belt, a publication from the National Institute for Women in Trades, Technology & Science (IWITTS) can point you in the right direction. Police Equipment & Uniforms Sized to Fit Women provides a listing of vendors who offer smaller sizing and dedicated women's sizes. The booklet includes contact information for vendors of biking equipment, gloves, handcuffs, holsters, weapons and uniforms. IWITTS has other publications related to women in public safety, free clip art, and a free on-line newsletter. For information on police equipment for women, go to [www.iwitts.com/html/empublicat.htm#equipment](http://www.iwitts.com/html/empublicat.htm#equipment).

# What's New from the WBC

## ***WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER WELCOMES NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR***



DeShawn R. Robinson-Chew has joined the WBC's staff and is responsible for providing business training programs and technical counseling to women business owners as they start up or grow their businesses. Prior to the Women's Business Center, Mrs. Robinson-Chew served as Manager of Marketing and Resource Development for a local micro-enterprise firm. In 2000, she became certified as a NxLevel Entrepreneurship Instructor, a technical assistance class series which will be offered soon at the Women's Business Center.



## ***HISPANIC ENTREPRENEUR PROJECT (PROYECTO EMPRESARIAL PARA HISPANOS) LAUNCHED***

The Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia and the Community Business Partnership joined with the Hispanic Committee of Virginia to create the Hispanic Entrepreneur Project. The Project provides training, assistance and support to Hispanics seeking to start or grow a small business enterprise. Initially piloted in October and November 2001 with over forty participants, the four-week series of programs teaches the basic of business ownership, taxation, marketing and business plans. Training and materials are provided entirely in Spanish and the guest speakers are volunteers from the local Hispanic community of entrepreneurs and professionals.

For more information contact Jesus Moreno of the Hispanic Committee of Virginia at (703) 671-5666 or Barbara Wrigley, Director of the Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia at (703) 534-6220 (Para dejar su mensaje en Espanol, puede llamar de nuevo al mismo numero (703) 534-6220 y marcar el numero tres) or visit the following websites: [www.hispaniccommitteeofvirginia.org](http://www.hispaniccommitteeofvirginia.org); [www.wbcnova.org](http://www.wbcnova.org); [www.cbponline.org](http://www.cbponline.org).



## ***OOZ AND OZ AND OXYGEN.COM***

We offer our combined congratulations to Myrna Hoffman, CEO and chief toy inventor of OOO & OZ in Annandale. Ms. Hoffman was recently named one of three



National Grand Prize Champions in Oxygen.com's "Build Your Own Business" competition. As a client of the Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia, she learned of this competition while attending a class on sources of financial capital for start-up businesses. For more information on services of the Women's Business Center, call (703) 534-6220 or check out their website at [www.wbcnova.org](http://www.wbcnova.org).

## ***WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA GOING STRONG***

Any woman in the Northern Virginia area who is interested in starting or expanding her small business can benefit from the programs and services of the Women's Business Center. The Center specializes in helping those currently under-served by existing programs, especially minority and socially disadvantaged women. You can find free and low-cost training programs, free one-on-one technical counseling, marketing assistance, access to those who can make loans, help in getting special certifications to do business with local, state and federal government, a resource library, computers and Internet access, and more. For more information on services of the Women's Business Center, call (703) 534-6220 or check out their website at [www.wbcnova.org](http://www.wbcnova.org).

## **TELECOMMUTING PROJECT ON A FAST TRACK IN FAIRFAX COUNTY**

Fairfax County is increasing its telecommuting program by 20%. That means that another 1,000 employees will be teleworking by 2005. Teleworking involves the use of information technology and telecommunications to replace work-related travel. Basically it means that employees work at home or closer to home rather than coming into the workplace every day. Communication is accomplished by phone, fax, modem, and teleconferencing.

Nationwide, more than 20 million workers are going to work simply by picking up the phone or turning on their computers. This workplace alternative pays real dividends for area businesses and their employees, while reducing traffic congestion and air pollution, increasing the area's economic vitality, and bolstering overall quality of life. For Fairfax County, this family- and worker-friendly program is an incentive for attracting and recruiting new employees to Fairfax County jobs as well as retaining high performing workers giving them the flexibility to work one or two days at home.

For more information, visit the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments website on telework at <http://www.mwcog.org/commuter/Bdy-Telework.html> or Commuter Connections at <http://www.mwcog.org/commuter/ccindex.html>.

According to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Commuter Calculator ([www.mwcog.org/commuter/costcommute.htm](http://www.mwcog.org/commuter/costcommute.htm)), if a person commutes from Culpeper to the Government Center in Fairfax County, the monthly cost of commuting is \$880.00 and the annual cost is \$10,560.00. This is based on the following assumptions:



That the daily roundtrip is 100 miles  
That your car averages 30 miles per gallon  
That the average cost of a gallon of gasoline is \$1.50  
That the average cost per mile for repairs, registration, maintenance and taxes is \$.07\*  
That the average cost per mile for financing, insurance and depreciation is \$.32\*.

*\*Cost per mile estimates based on the 1996 Federal Highway Administration's Cost of Owning and Operating a Vehicle.*

## **OFW TO COLLABORATE WITH WHITE OAKS ELEMENTARY ON GIRLS IN TECHNOLOGY ADVOCACY GRANT**

This spring, the Office For Women begins an exciting new collaboration with White Oaks Elementary School in Burke to increase girls' confidence and competence in math, science, and technology. Under the leadership of White Oaks Principal John Tozzi, the school will use a \$5,000 grant from the Boeing Company to support its new Girls in Technology program.

Female students will begin to explore math, science, and technology at an early age in order to increase their awareness of the importance of these fields and related career possibilities. Student activities range from aeronautics to robotics. A key component of the program includes opportunities for personal interaction with women in math, science, and technology careers and increased awareness of the factors that determine success in these subjects.

In partnership with White Oaks Elementary and other members of our Girls and Technology Advisory Committee, the Office For Women is developing program models that empower young women to more effectively realize their potential in the fields of math, science, and technology.

We are doing this by helping build a network of after-school programs targeted at girls. Currently, at least eight Fairfax County schools participating in the Office For Women's Girls and Technology Advisory Committee have started or are in the process of beginning programs aimed at increasing the under-representation of girls in computer science and technology-related courses. In addition, the Reston Teen Center is also offering a program targeted at girls.



# Program for Survivors of Torture and Severe Trauma (PSTT)

As our culture is enriched by the addition of peoples from around the world, we are also confronted with those cultural aspects that are not in accord with the freedoms offered in ours. One example relates to the refugees from other countries who were victims of torture. It is something we don't think about very often because it is foreign to our way of life. Unfortunately, that is not universally true and those who come to the United States for sanctuary unwillingly and unknowingly carry the effects of the trauma with them.

Torture is the intentional infliction of physical or mental suffering to extract information or to punish opponents. It is a worldwide phenomenon that occurs in 120 countries and that afflicts men, women, and children alike. Fairfax County is an internationally diverse metropolitan area, home to thousands of refugees and immigrants from all over the world. With prevalence rates of torture estimated to range from 5% to 35% of all refugees, many torture survivors are among those who have resettled in this area.

The consequences of torture are physical, psychological, emotional and cognitive. It is not unusual for survivors to have post-traumatic stress disorder and to suffer from anger, sleep disturbances, emotional numbness, and difficulty maintaining close relationships. Survivors may also experience problems with their memory, difficulty concentrating, and problems learning new information such as a second language. The overall effect is profound. As an example, Psychotherapist Pauline Tran at the Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis, Minnesota says that the Vietnamese culture tends to stigmatize the concept of "mental health," and any kind of psychological evaluation or assessment conjures up stereotypes of the mentally ill as crazy or deranged. As a result, there is a high degree of reluctance and resistance among street-education camp survivors to even acknowledge that they need help.

The Program for Survivors of Torture and Severe Trauma (PSTT) is a direct service program established in 1998 for the survivors of torture, their spouses, and their children living in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Services are offered on a sliding scale. Survivors from any country or state are eligible for treatment under PSTT.

Torture has a devastating impact on a survivor in many areas of his or her life. Resettlement in this country can also add massive stress. To address the complex needs of survivors of torture, PSTT takes a holistic integrative approach and offers a wide range of services for the victim and his or her family. These services are especially important for children because when a child's family member has suffered from trauma, a child's life is also affected. Many children of survivors of torture or children who have experienced war trauma show psychological, social, behavioral, and developmental consequences of their own or their parents' experiences. PSTT offers services to children and their families that include play therapy, art therapy, individual and family therapy, home-based services, and in-school counseling programs.

PSTT provides services in 25 languages: English, Russian, Hindi, Spanish, Arabic, German, Somali, Laotian, Punjabi, Turkish, Hungarian, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Urdu, Japanese, Taiwanese, French, Korean, Khmer, Amharic, Kurdish, Tagalog, Farsi, Bosnian/Serbo-Croatia, and Portuguese

<http://www.cmhsweb.org/services/torture>

## Human Trafficking and Exploitation

**WOMEN FORCED INTO PROSTITUTION.**

**13 YEAR-OLD HELD CAPTIVE, FORCED TO WORK IN FACTORY.**

**WOMEN AND CHILDREN SMUGGLED INTO U.S.**

Sound like headlines from a third world country? Guess again. These are conditions that exist in Fairfax County, Virginia, one of the most affluent counties in the nation. Boat People SOS (BP SOS) is an Arlington based non-profit dedicated to helping the victims of human trafficking. According to BP SOS, human trafficking often involves the recruitment and smuggling of foreign nationals into the United States to force them to submit to abominable conditions and amounts to modern day slavery. Victims are forced to work in factories, fields, restaurants, and private homes and have to turn their pay over to their captors. Many women and children are forced into prostitution or other illicit sexual activities.

In one case, Mexican farm workers were smuggled into the United States and then held captive and forced to work until they paid off their smuggling fees. According to these particular victims, they were smuggled into the United States in a van and during the three-day trip, were not allowed to leave the van for bathroom breaks or for food. The youngest victim was 13 years of age.

For more information on this issue, visit the Department of Justice at [www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/tpwetf.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/tpwetf.htm). To report suspected instances of trafficking or worker exploitation, contact the FBI field office nearest you or contact the Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force Complaint Line at 1-888-428-7581. The Complaint Line is toll-free and offers foreign language translation services in most languages as well as TTY. After business hours, the Complaint Line has a message service in English, Spanish, Russian and Mandarin only.

To contact Boat People SOS, send them an email at [bpsos\\_veta@hotmail.com](mailto:bpsos_veta@hotmail.com), call 703-538-2190 or stop by and see them at the First Virginia Bank Building at 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 640, Falls Church, VA 22042.

## New Commission Members

The Commission For Women welcomes the following members;



**Mary M. Byers (Springfield District)** has been both an elementary and middle school teacher and has been an active volunteer in the County. She has a Master's Degree in Education and Counseling.



**Kathy K. Goggin (Sully District)** is an associate member of the Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants and a member of the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce. Her volunteer work has been extensive in local and state civic organizations.



**Patricia Garcia (Hunter Mill District)** is the president of LEO Associates, which provides organizational development services. She has a wide background in project management related to technology, bilingual training in businesses, and project management and has worked in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Frances Hicks (Mt. Vernon District)** has a professional background in public policy related to women, particularly in the areas of domestic violence, homelessness, poverty and aging. Her community activism has often focused on homelessness and systems of childcare. She is completing her Ph.D. in sociology.

## U.S. OFFERS NEW T VISA FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 created a new form of visa to protect certain victims of human trafficking. The T Visa allows them to live and work legally in the United States for three years. After that initial period, they may be eligible to become permanent residents. This visa applies to victims of a severe form of human trafficking who have complied with reasonable requests to assist in the investigation or prosecution of traffickers. It also applies to those who are under the age of 15 and who would "suffer extreme hardship involving unusual and severe harm" if made to leave the United States. It is designed to protect trafficking victims, and to assist law enforcement officials find and bring traffickers to justice. Because families also are frequently in danger from traffickers, adult T visa recipients may petition to have their spouses and children join them in the United States if it is believed that these family members would suffer "extreme hardship" if left behind. This provision also applies to T visa recipients under the age of 21; they, too, may petition to bring their parents to the United States.

Trafficked persons may apply directly to the INS for a visa. Applications will be reviewed by the Vermont Service Center (where violence against women cases are currently processed). A maximum of 5,000 T visas will be issued annually; additional eligible applicants will be placed on a waiting list. To obtain a copy of the application form, call 1-800-870-3676 or visit their website at [www.ins.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/1-914.htm](http://www.ins.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/1-914.htm).

To report incidences of human trafficking, call 1-888-428-7581.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED